

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 ISO-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 COME-00

FRB-03 INR-07 NSAE-00 USIA-06 TRSE-00 XMB-02

OPIC-03 SP-02 LAB-04 SIL-01 OMB-01 NSC-05 SS-15

STR-04 CEA-01 L-03 H-01 PA-01 PRS-01 AGRE-00

OES-07 CAB-02 DODE-00 DOTE-00 FAA-00 /102 W

-----083519 111000Z /17

R 102000Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY SUVA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6360

INFO AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SUVA 0953

CINCPAC FOR PLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: TN, EAID, ETRD, EFIS, UR

SUBJECT: RUSSIANS OFFER PLANES TO TONGA

1. SOVIETS HAVE OFFERED CIVILIAN AIRCRAFT RANGING FROM HELICOPTERS TO TWIN-ENGINE PASSENGER JETS TO TONGAN GOVERNMENT ON CONCESSIONARY TERMS, INCLUDING FIVE YEAR POSTPONEMENT OF FIRST PAYMENT AFTER DELIVERY. ACCORDING DR. LANGI KAVALIKU, MINISTER OF EDUCATION, WORKS AND CIVAIR, RUSSIAN COMMERCIAL COUNSELOR AT WELLINGTON (FEDOR I. SHPOTA) AND ASSISTANT (ALEXANDER A. MALKHANOV) PUSHED VERY HARD FOR AIRCRAFT DEAL DURING VISIT TO TONGA TWO WEEKS AGO. REPS CALLED ON PRIME MIN. KAVALIKU, OTHER OFFICIALS.

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2. KAVALIKU TOLD ME RUSSIANS ALSO RAISED POSSIBILITY OF BARTER ARRANGEMENT IN WHICH SOVIET FREIGHTERS CALLING AT AUSTRALIAN PORTS COULD BE DIVERTED TO TONGA TO LOAD BANANAS AND OTHER PRODUCE FOR SHIPMENT TO EASTERN EUROPE AND USSR. PAYMENT WOULD BE MADZHRN RUSSIAN GOODS.

3. ACCORDING TO TONGAN PRESS, SHPOTA SAID DURING VISIT USSR PREPARED SUPPLY TONGA WITH VARIETY OF EQUIPMENT INCLUDING MECHANIZED AGRICULTURAL EQUIPMENT, PRE-FAB HOUSES AND BUILDINGS, AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE. COUNSELOR QUOTED AS CLAIMING, "WITH DEVELOPING COUNTRIES, WE HAVE MORE THAN 100 DIFFERENT AGREEMENTS FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE. IN RETURN, COUNTRIES PAY THEIR NATIONAL PRODUCT."

4. I BELIEVE VISIT WAS PROMPTED IN PART BY KING TUPOU'S WELL-KNOWN DESIRE FOR OWN AIRLINE AND BY CONTINUING SOVIET INTEREST IN SOUTH PACIFIC Foothold. BUT KAVALIKU BELIEVES NOTHING WILL COME OF COMMERCIAL APPROACH. AS HE OBSERVED, "IF RUSSIANS HAD DONE HOMEWORK, THEY WOULD KNOW WE GET EQUIPMENT THROUGH AID SINCE WE CAN'T AFFORD TO PAY FOR IT."
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Disposition Approved on Date:
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